

adoption process. I was thankful to know of the Hutcheson family's story. By working with my colleagues in the Senate, we passed the bipartisan Accuracy for Adoptees Act, which was then signed into law. Thanks in large part to the efforts of Chip and Karen, more families across the country are able to more easily navigate the rewarding yet often difficult process of bringing a child into a loving home through adoption.

Chip's unwavering dedication to his work and his community left a mark on the readers of Caldwell County. His writings not only brought the news, but he also served as a voice for people in his community by expressing the beauty and joy of western Kentucky life. After decades of hard work, Chip has earned his retirement. Along with his readers, I will miss his observations about life and current events. I would like to join with the Princeton community and all of the supporters of the Times Leader who congratulate Chip on his retirement and wish his family many relaxing and enjoyable years together. Further, I would like to ask my colleagues in the Senate to join me in commemorating Chip Hutcheson on a distinguished career in community journalism.

#### THE GLOBAL CRISIS OF KILLINGS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on July 13, Global Witness, a widely respected international nongovernmental organization that reports on corruption and other criminality involving the exploitation of natural resources, released a report entitled, "Defenders of the Earth—Global Killings of Land and Environmental Defenders in 2016."

According to the report, 2016 was the worst year yet for environmental and land rights defenders. At least 200 were killed in what has become a global crisis, pitting local communities, particularly impoverished indigenous groups, against multinational mining, logging, agribusiness, hydroelectric, and hydrocarbon companies that are often supported with foreign financing.

The report says the number of such killings is increasing, up from 185 in 2015 and spreading to new countries—24 in 2016 compared to 16 in 2015. However, because many of these attacks occur in remote areas, the actual number is likely much higher. The number of killings is also only part of the appalling story. Death threats, arbitrary arrests, sexual assaults and other forms of abuse, and misuse of the legal process are among the tactics used to try to intimidate environmental activists.

Often, when faced with peaceful resistance to the construction of dams that displace people from their homes and to logging and mining operations that destroy the forest and pollute the water, the response of the companies, backed up by local security forces, is to accuse the protestors of being "against development," try to divide them with

bribes and promises that are later broken, and eventually to silence them with force. The companies get rich and move on, local officials collect payoffs, the electricity or minerals are exported to cities or other countries, and the people whose land was destroyed or water contaminated are immeasurably worse off.

As one activist, who has for years spoken out against Latin America's largest open pit mine, told Global Witness, "[t]hey threaten you so you will shut up. I can't shut up. I can't stay silent faced with all that is happening to my people. We are fighting for our lands, for our water, for our lives."

The reports states, "[t]he battle to protect the planet is rapidly intensifying and the cost can be counted in human lives. More people in more countries are being left with no option but to take a stand against the theft of their land or the trashing of their environment. Too often they are brutally silenced by political and business elites, while the investors that bankroll them do nothing. . . . Almost 40 percent of those murdered were indigenous, as land they've inhabited for generations is stolen by companies, landowners or government officials. Projects are typically imposed on communities without their free, prior and informed consent, backed up by force: police and soldiers are suspected perpetrators in at least 43 murders. Protest is often the only option left to communities exercising their right to have a say about the use of their land and natural resources, putting them on a collision course with those seeking profit at any cost."

The report notes the criminalization of these courageous activists, including in the United States. "They are often painted as criminals, facing trumped-up criminal charges and aggressive civil cases brought by governments and companies seeking to silence them."

It is the responsibility of governments to defend the lives and rights of their citizens. Instead, too many governments are violating their own laws and aiding and abetting in these attacks and assassinations—either by the conduct of their security forces or by their failure to conduct credible investigations of these crimes and to bring those responsible to justice.

Honduran activist Berta Caceres is but one example. Instead of protecting her, the government and the company treated her like a criminal. She was killed for having the courage to defend the rights and territory of the Lenca people. In Honduras alone—a country the size of Kentucky with just 8 million people—more than 100 environmental defenders have reportedly suffered similar fates since 2009, for which no one has been convicted and punished.

I hope this report will spur governments, companies, foreign banks, and international financial institutions to take far stronger action to respect the territorial rights of affected people, to

defend freedom of speech and association, to protect the environment, and to uphold the rule of law.

#### RECOGNIZING NASA'S LANGLEY RESEARCH CENTER

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, on behalf of myself and the senior Senator from Virginia, MARK WARNER, we want to commemorate an important, early step in our Nation's emergence as a world leader in flight, space exploration, and atmospheric science.

One hundred years ago today on July 17, 1917, NASA's Langley Research Center was founded in Hampton, VA. What was once a quiet expanse of farmland and marsh on a riverbank near the Chesapeake Bay has helped transform our Nation's transportation system and the world's understanding of our universe.

That date in 1917 represents the beginning of a journey that would eventually take Americans to the moon and American technology to Mars and beyond.

Born in the days of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, the precursor to NASA, Langley was the agency's first field center and our Nation's first civilian aeronautics laboratory.

The groundbreaking and sky conquering research conducted during Langley's early days led to major advances in aeronautics and, in the years after World War I, helped our Nation cement its status as a pacesetter in flight research. Langley's important work also served as a foundation for America's burgeoning aviation industry.

Langley won the first of its seven Collier trophies, awarded for the highest achievements in aeronautics or astronautics in our Nation, in 1929. That trophy, won for development of cowling for radial air-cooled engines, honored a high level of technical excellence that Langley has maintained ever since.

Over the decades, Langley has evolved into a research center supporting all of NASA's areas of emphasis, from human space exploration to Earth science and from aeronautics to technology development.

NASA Langley's legacy of discovery and innovation is truly remarkable. Researchers at the center helped refine technologies and designs across all flight regimes—subsonic, transonic, supersonic, and hypersonic—revolutionizing the shape and performance of today's aircraft and spacecraft.

This year, we all witnessed some of NASA Langley's contributions to the space race through the lens of the Oscar-nominated film, "Hidden Figures." The film told the story of the many contributions of NASA Langley employees, especially African-American women, to the Mercury 7 mission involving America's first astronauts.

Beyond that, Neil Armstrong and other Apollo astronauts learned how to land on the moon by training at